

**The Top 25:
How they
Fared**

The Associated Press ratings

Florida State (12-1) beat Nebraska 18-16	Nebraska (11-1) lost to Florida State 18-16	West Virginia (11-1) lost to Florida 41-7	Notre Dame (11-1) beat Texas A&M 24-21	Auburn (11-0) did not play	Tennessee (9-1) lost to Penn State 31-13	Texas A&M (10-2) lost to Notre Dame 24-21	Florida (11-2) beat W. Virginia 41-7	Wisconsin (10-1) beat UCLA 21-16	Miami (9-3) lost to Arizona 28-0	Ohio State (10-1) beat BYU 28-21	N. Carolina (10-1) beat Alabama 24-10	Penn State (10-2) beat Tennessee 31-13	UCLA (8-4) lost to Wisconsin 21-16	Boston College (9-3) beat Virginia 31-13	Arizona (10-2) beat Miami 28-0	Colorado (8-3) beat Fresno State 41-20	Alabama (9-3) beat North Carolina 24-10	Oklahoma (9-3) beat Texas Tech 41-10	Kansas State (9-2) beat Wyoming 52-17	Indiana (8-4) lost to Va. Tech 45-20	Va. Tech (9-5) beat Indiana 45-20	Michigan (7-4) beat NC State 42-7	Clemson (9-3) beat Kentucky 14-13	Fresno State (8-4) lost to Colorado 41-20	Louisville (9-2) beat Michigan State 18-7
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Sports

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Tom Shatel

Huskers' Hearts Break

NU's Bid for National Championship Falls Two Points Short in Game for Ages

**It Says Here:
Huskers No. 1**

Miami
It was a game nobody deserved to lose. And nobody did. Certainly not Nebraska. Yes, history will show that Florida State outlasted, but not outplayed, the valiant Cornhuskers 18-16 Saturday night in an Orange Bowl Classic that lived up to its name. Sometime today, the Seminoles will be crowned with the national championship in the Associated Press poll and, in all likelihood, the coaches' USA Today-CNN poll as well.
But you could just as easily say the Huskers, today, are No. 1 in the wacky, wonderful world of college football.
In fact, it says here that they are. Upon further review — and there could have been many of those — Nebraska won this game. The Huskers deserved to win. They played a brilliant defensive game plan to the hilt. They stuffed the vaunted Seminole fast break. They made the plays on offense.
They hung in, like the fighters they are, refusing to lose. And they didn't.

Phantom Penalty

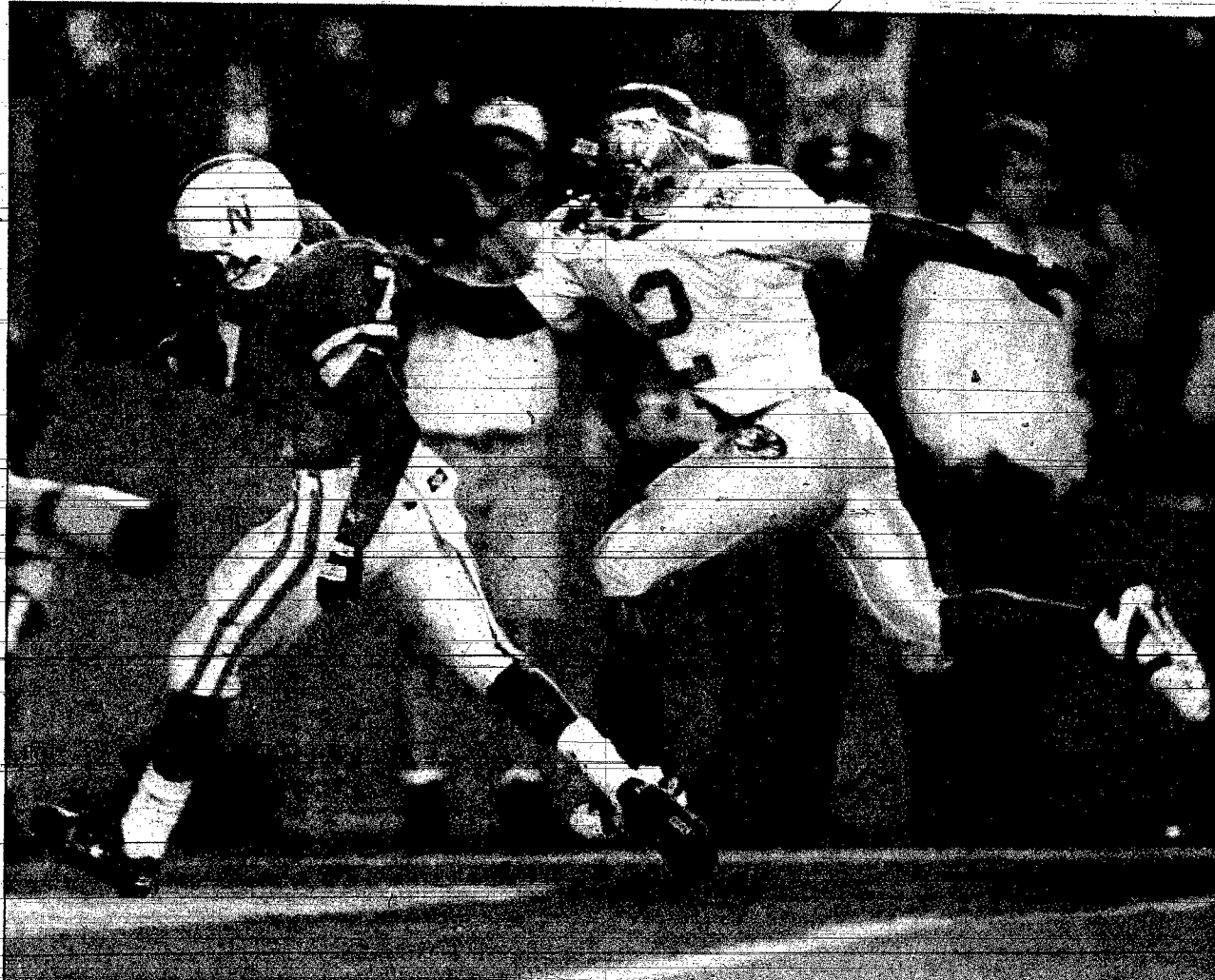
The only thing they didn't do was commit the phantom penalty on a 71-yard touchdown punt return in the first quarter.
The great debate of who's No. 1 will rage today — Florida State and Notre Dame will take their shots — but the Huskers had their own debate to chew and digest Saturday night. And it did not go down easily.
Nebraska trailed 3-0 late in the second quarter when senior Corey Dixon took a punt on his own 29, dodged a couple of Seminoles and took off on a lightning bolt of a 71-yard touchdown return. It was certainly a blow, if too early for a knockout punch, to FSU's psyche.
But then you do what you always do when something like that happens.
You look back.
You put your hands over your eyes, hold them for 10 seconds or so, and then slowly pull the fingers back to see if a heart-breaking piece of yellow linen is lying on the field.
And, sure as Tom Osborne's luck is bad, there was the unbelievable, lying on the ground, back at the 30. The flag lay at the feet of Husker sophomore Tyrone Williams, who stood there, hands on hips, just wishing he could snap his fingers and make the nasty yellow rag go away. Or bury the truth somehow.
Except, in this case, the truth was a lie.

Pulled Back

The truth is, as true as a TV replay can be, Williams pulled back on the so-called "pushing in the back" penalty that nullified the touchdown and, thus, the national championship for Nebraska.
The truth is, Nebraska won this game.
We have more evidence for the defense, your honor.
Yes, the Huskers pulled off a "lucky" touchdown — and don't you know, Osborne was overdue for one of those — with a tipped TD pass to Reggie Baul for a 7-3 lead in the second quarter. You could say it shouldn't have happened. You could also say it should have been 14-3.
But there was the touchdown that shouldn't have counted: In the third quarter, Florida State fullback William Floyd clearly fumbled before he broke the plane of the goal line, Touchdown, FSU. The score: FSU 12, Nebraska 7, Referees 0 clues.

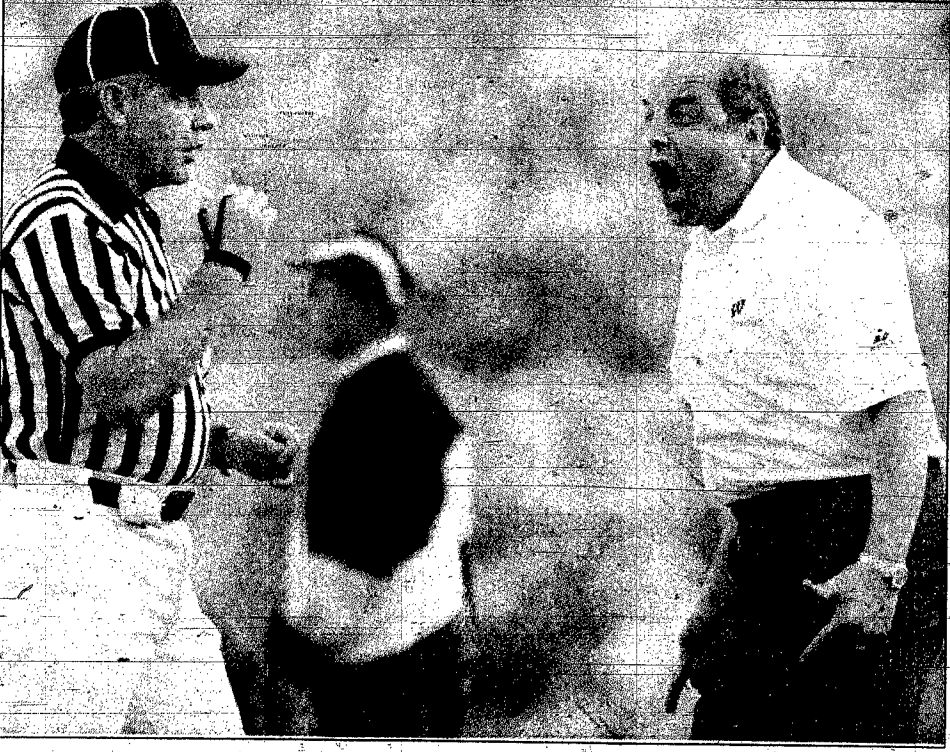
Time for No-Call

And, perhaps the most unforgivable zebra sin of all: the 15-yard late-hit penalty on Barron Miles, who pushed Warrick Dunn as he was going out of bounds. Anytime, that's a questionable call. But with 45 seconds left in a game of this magnitude, it's a no-brainer. A no-call.
It is history now. What you don't want to do is cry about a handful of plays and ifs, ands or buts that happen so often when two titans clash for the golden fleece. Bad calls happen in football.
In this case, don't forget the Huskers' valor, their effort, their heart and soul in the face of more injury and adversity. On Saturday night, they lost a game but won their respect back. They'd rather have the game.



TOUCHDOWN PASS: Nebraska's Reggie Baul, No. 7, scores the Huskers' first touchdown, with Florida State's Clifton Abraham chasing him, Tommie Frazier's 34-yard scoring pass to Baul actually was intended for Clester Johnson and came with 5:59 left in the first half. The ball was tipped by FSU's Devin Bush before Baul caught it.

BY LEE BARFKNECHT
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER
Miami — For the second time in 10 years, a national college football championship slipped away from Nebraska in the east end zone at Orange Bowl stadium.
With one second left Saturday night, the 17½-point underdog Huskers lined up a 45-yard field-goal attempt that would have given them a one-point win in the 60th annual Orange Bowl.
But senior Byron Bennett, whose 27-yard field goal with 1:16 to play had given Nebraska the lead, hooked his game-winning try wide left.
That allowed Florida State to hold on to an 18-16 Orange Bowl victory and make a claim for its first national championship.
"I guess it was our time," FSU Coach Bobby Bowden said, "because Nebraska played as good or better than we did."
"Nebraska is a lot better than I thought. A lot better."
Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne shook his head when asked if this loss hurt more than the one 10 years ago, when the Huskers saw a two-point conversion pass knocked away in the final minutes in a one-point loss to Miami.
"This hurts," Osborne said. "But it's a different kind of hurt."
"I told my team I was proud of them. People play for rings and trophies, but as far as I'm concerned we won. We didn't win on the scoreboard, but we played great football."
"We could have won it just easily as we lost it. I doubt if we'll ever get voted the championship now. There may be some coaches somewhere who will say, 'You've got one loss and Florida State does, too.' And that would be nice."
"But the main thing isn't the rings and the championships. It's playing like champions, and that's what we did."
Nebraska, which took its first halftime lead in a bowl game in seven years, showed championship form in the fourth quarter with a nine-point rally.
Freshman I-back Lawrence Phillips, playing in place of the injured Calvin



Barry Badgers Rose Bowl Official
Wisconsin Coach Barry Alvarez shouts his disapproval at an unidentified official after two Badger players were ejected for fighting in the third quarter of the Rose Bowl on Saturday. Wisconsin went on to defeat UCLA 21-16 for the Badgers' first Rose Bowl victory. The Badgers finished at 10-1-1, the team's best record ever and its first 10-win season. Page 8.

Notre Dame Rallies, Lobbies

Dallas (AP) — Notre Dame kept its long shot national championship hopes alive. Barely.
It took a 45-yard punt return by Mike Miller and Kevin Pendergast's 31-yard field goal with 2:17 to play Saturday to rally the fourth-ranked Fighting Irish to a 24-21 victory over No. 7 Texas A&M in the Cotton Bowl.
Notre Dame (11-1) had to come from behind twice to subdue the Aggies (10-2), who were looking for respect after last year's 25-point loss to the Irish.
"If no football team in this country goes undefeated we deserve the national title," Notre Dame Coach Lou Holtz said. "The first tiebreaker in the NFL is head-to-head. Miami beat us out in 1989, and the tiebreaker was head-to-head."
The Irish were hoping for a slim victory by Florida State over unbeaten Nebraska in the Orange Bowl and a victory by Florida in the Sugar Bowl over unbeaten West Virginia.
Notre Dame's only loss was 41-39 to Boston College on a last-second field goal. The Irish beat Florida State 31-24.
"All I know is we beat one fine football team, and let's see what happens because I remember we beat Florida State head-to-head," Holtz said. "Playing A&M here is very tough. It's a home game. We couldn't hear."
"Nobody wants to play A&M in Dallas. They have a great team. I knew it was going to be tough and it was. It's never easy playing on road."
Holtz said he wasn't worried about Pendergast coming through. Pendergast was — a little.
"I was kind of nervous when we were driving after Mike's punt return," Pendergast said. "But I wasn't nervous at all."
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Orange Bowl's Key Plays

A look at some key plays and calls in Nebraska's 18-16 loss to Florida State in the Orange Bowl:
■ **1:34 left in the first quarter:** Corey Dixon's 71-yard punt return for a touchdown is called back because of an illegal block against Nebraska. The game was tied 0-0.
■ **Second play of the second quarter:** Nebraska's leading receiver, Abdul Muhammad, is knocked out of the game with cracked ribs on a clean hit by Richard Coes.
■ **9:37 left in the second quarter:** Nebraska's John Reece is called for pass interference on a third-and-six play, giving FSU the ball at the Huskers' 19-yard line. Scott Bentley subsequently gives FSU a 3-0 lead with a 34-yard field goal.
■ **6:46 left in the second quarter:** Nebraska's leading rusher, Calvin Jones, is knocked out of the game with a bruised shoulder.
■ **5:59 left in the second quarter:** FSU's Devin Bush tips a pass intended for Clester Johnson, and Reggie Baul grabs it and scores on a 34-yard pass to put Nebraska ahead 7-3.
■ **2:41 left in the second quarter:** Corey Dixon's third-down reception to the Florida State 33-yard line that would have been good for a first down is ruled out of bounds, and Nebraska has to punt. Bentley subsequently makes a 25-yard field goal with 22 seconds left.
■ **12:50 left in the third quarter:** Florida State fullback William Floyd goes airborne from the Nebraska 1-yard line. NU's Toby Wright meets him near the goal line and knocks the ball out, with NU's Mike Anderson recovering, but officials rule it a touchdown. That gives FSU a 12-7 lead.
■ **4:59 left in the third quarter:** A roughing-the-passer penalty against Nebraska's Donta Jones gives FSU the ball at Nebraska's 23-yard line. Four plays later, Bentley's 44-yard field goal gives FSU a 15-7 lead.
■ **14:55 left in the game:** After Lawrence Phillips' 12-yard touchdown run, Ken Alexander and Derrick Alexander run Erazier out of bounds short of the goal line on the two-point try.
■ **Seven minutes left in the game:** Frazier's pass from the Florida State 29-yard line is intercepted by Coes.
■ **3:50 left in the game:** Lineman Zach Wiegert recovers Phillips' fumble to keep Nebraska's drive alive.
■ **2:18 left in the game:** Frazier gets loose for a 32-yard run that finally ends at the FSU 4-yard line with the



BYRON BENNETT: The Husker place-kicker booted a 27-yard field goal with 1:16 left in the game to give NU a 16-15 lead. His 45-yard attempt on the game's final play was wide left.
help of face-mask penalty.
■ **1:16 left in the game:** Byron Bennett kicks a 27-yard field goal to give Nebraska a 16-15 lead.
■ **1:16 left in the game:** Bennett's kickoff goes out of bounds. No time goes off the clock, and FSU gets the ball at its 35-yard line.
■ **45 seconds left in the game:** Ward completes a 21-yard pass to Warrick Dunn. Miles hits Dunn out of bounds, and Nebraska is penalized 16 yards. That puts the ball on NU's 18-yard line.
■ **41 seconds left in the game:** Wright tackles Kez McCorvey just inside the end zone on a pass attempt, and Nebraska is penalized for an interference penalty that puts the ball on the NU 3-yard line.
■ **21 seconds left in the game:** Bentley hits the game-winning 22-yard field goal.
■ **21 seconds left in the game:** Florida State penalized 15 yards on the kickoff for an excessive celebration. Miles returns the subsequent kickoff 24 yards to the Nebraska 44-yard line.
■ **One second left in the game:** Frazier completes a 27-yard pass to Trumaine Bell. There's no time left on the clock, but officials reset the clock to one second. After the officials first mark the ball at the 34-yard line, and then the 28-yard line, Bennett misses a 45-yard field-goal attempt wide left.